(c) and (d) BSNL has not sought any special package for this purpose. BSNL have proposed an expenditure of Rs. 1320 Crores during 2002-2003.

(e) No private company operating in the rural areas of the country has opposed the use of Wireless in Local Loop Technology.

(f) Does not arise in view of (e) above.

Operation of NIC Network

219. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether NIC Network is operating in the country;

(b) if so, the number of districts covered under the NIC Netwrok;

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to make it operational up to the Block/Tehsil level; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time-frame fixed by Government for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The number of District Centres (District Collectorates) covered are 585 districts.

(c) and (d) Government had approved a plan to extend NICNET to block level in 487 Block in all the eight North Eastern States including Sikkim as a part of setting up IT based Community Information Centres (CICs) in this region. This project has since been completed by NIC in August, 2002. There is no other sanctioned proposal.

Branch Post Offices at Nandla in H.P.

220. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had received any proposal in the month of July 2002 regarding opening of Branch Post Office at village Nandla which lies in District Shimla of Himachal Pradesh;